

Statement by Mr. Pawan Kapoor, Joint Secretary, on High-level meeting on the Democratic Republic of Congo at the ECOSOC Chamber on September 27, 2012

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary General for his initiative to host today's meeting on the eastern DRC. We hope that this meeting will facilitate a common understanding among the stakeholders on measures to be taken to resolve the crisis.

2. Since early 2012, Eastern DRC has witnessed serious deterioration in the situation, which has various dimensions, including security, ethnic, illegal trade in natural resources, and a culture of impunity. Activities of the rebel groups, led by M-23, have also had a serious impact on the humanitarian situation. The fighting has uprooted nearly half a million people, including some 220,000 people in North Kivu and 200,000 in South Kivu. More than 51,000 have had to flee to neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda.

3. While the operations of MONUSCO have helped stabilise the situation, a long-term solution calls for addressing the underlying causes that have not allowed the DRC to extend its State authority to its eastern part. While security sector reforms and strengthening of the DRC armed forces are pursued, it is necessary to consider a political dialogue among the countries of the region, particularly between the DRC and Rwanda, so that the legitimate security concerns of all countries are addressed.

4. In this connection, Mr. Chairman, we welcome the initiatives taken by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). The enlarged joint verification mechanism should be fully deployed along the DRC-Rwanda borders to ensure that there is no cross-border movement of armed groups. The proposal of the ICGLR for the deployment of an international neutral force should be preceded by political agreement between the DRC and Rwanda. It should also not adversely impact on the mandate of MONUSCO.

5. We also think that the agreement of 23 March 2009 can form the basis for addressing the issue. What is needed is serious involvement of both the DRC and Rwanda to review the agreement comprehensively, including issues that were not addressed fully and the factors that led to the rebellion, like the return of Tutsi refugees, their integration into the FARDC, deployment of newly integrated personnel, and, of course, SSR and DDR processes. Unless these issues are addressed, the continuing instability would help other armed groups, both Congolese and non-Congolese. In this context, a strengthened FDLR would negatively affect Rwandan interests, and lead to larger instability in the region and draw in other countries.

6. Mr. Chairman, India, as a major troop contributor to MONUSCO, remains committed to UN efforts at stabilising the situation in the eastern DRC. We will also continue to be a partner for development of the DRC through bilateral as well as

regional and continental level cooperation. Under the second India-Africa Forum Summit, a vocational training centre is proposed to be set up in the DRC. We have also given lines of credit worth US\$ 210 million for two hydroelectric projects in the country.

7. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we support an active role by the United Nations to facilitate engagement of the concerned countries in the region so that they reach an agreement on the long-term solution to the problems facing the eastern DRC.

I thank you.

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